The proposed railway scheme was not necessary for a State like Travancore. It was inaugurated in the interests of a few local representatives and influential traders. The proposal to register a large extent of land was also a direct result of the railway scheme and intended to raise the necessary funds. There was absolutely no need for raising such funds from foreigners in view of the fact that the financial transactions in the year 1101 resulted in a surplus of Rs. 23 lakhs.

Instead of finding new means of transport, it would be well to regulate the existing means. The increase of motor vehicles in the State had affected the safety of the people, besides draining away from the country a large portion of the people's money. There was every convenience for travelling from one part of the State to the other by means of motor cars. But the fares were changed according to the whims and fancies of the owners. The fares should be regulated.

In conclusion, the member once again prayed that the proposed railway scheme should be dropped and that adequate amounts should be spent annually for the improvement of existing roads and the construction of new ones useful to the people at large.

DEWAN'S REPLY: Mr. Padmanabha Pillai, you entered into the question as to the relative merits of roads, railways and motor cars which is a very large question and if you and I were to debate it, I am afraid, no other member will have chance to say anything for the next few days. Therefore, I commend you to study some literature on the subject. Recently, a most informative and valuable monograph was published on the subject of the economic value of roads in relation to railways, having specific reference to South Indian conditions. If you will ask the Chief Secretary, he will give you the title of the work and the place wherefrom you can get it. It is a very instructive and exceedingly interesting work to read. All the other points that you took up, except one, I propose to make a note of and look into.

The one point that I am going to refer to immediately is your suggestion that the Statement of Action taken on the last year's representations would be very much more helpful to the members if it were placed in their hands some time before the Assembly met. It is a good suggestion and I am in full sympathy with it. But this is the first time that this has been prepared and let me tell you that the amount of work it threw upon the Secretariat was very great. To prepare these 82 pages dealing with 188 main heads with numerous sub-heads of subjects is not a thing that could be accomplished quite easily. It is indeed a matter for congratulation and I congratulate my Secretariat that they were able to turn this out and have it ready the day before this Assembly met.

59. Administration of the Public Works Department.

MR. NARAYANA PILLAI KRISHNA PILLAI (*Member, Kunnatnad taluk, Group I*) spoke about the defects in, and the manner of carrying out of, public works. It was not uncommon for the Public Works Department to carry on a particular work without getting sanction for its estimate. There was a vast difference between the estimated amounts and the actual amounts spent, in several cases. That was due to inaccurate estimation. Ordinarily, no work was completed without two or three revised estimates ; and when completed, the actual amount spent was double the originally estimated amount. The officers did not obviously pay much attention to estimating. It was only when there was pressure from the higher authorities that the subordinate officers submitted a revised estimate. Sometimes the revised estimates were sent up only along with the completion bills.

There was inordinate delay in the preparation of an estimate and in getting sanction for the same. Such delays could be minimised if the Sub-Division Officers and the Division Officers paid a little more attention to the work and reduced as far as possible unnecessary correspondence.

There was utter confusion in getting works done through contract agency. In his anxiety to get the contract for a particular work for himself, a contractor might offer the lowest tender. But subsequently he might be forced to put in petitions to

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the authorities saying that the prices of articles had gone high and the rates were too low. The revision of rates resulted in loss to the Government and sometimes the claims of contractors had to be settled through the civil courts. Loss of the kind was due to the indifference of the authorities shown at the time of execution of the agreement.

The Chief Engineer was authorised to incur an additional expenditure of 10 per cent. of the estimated amount in every case. In cases where the excess expenditure exceeded that percentage, the sanction of the Government was necessary. The power to incur additional expenditure was intended to be exercised only in exceptional cases. But in actual practice it was availed of invariably. In order that the practice might be done away with it should be ruled that the excess cost should be recovered from the officer preparing the estimate or others responsible for the same.

As regards expenditure on supervision, the member referred to the appointment and disbandment of *maistries*, which was regulated by no principle whatsoever. There was a circular to the effect that 10 per cent. of the amount spent on repairs should alone be spent on the work establishment. As soon as that limit was reached the *maistries* were disbanded. Such a contingency should be avoided and the number of *maistries* that could be appointed every year with the amount under disposal fixed.

Early in the beginning of every year, estimates should be prepared in respect of all works for which there was budget provision. As soon as the estimates were sanctioned, tenders should be invited from contractors and agreements taken and the works carried out on the responsibility of the Sub-Division Officers and Division Officers. Bridges, buildings, etc., should be constructed before the monsoon sets in.

Again, in regard to the utilisation of funds available every year, the policy followed by the Government was not satisfactory. More money should be spent on means of communication in the northern taluks of the State and less on buildings and other luxurious works in the other taluks. Proper care should also be taken in determining the order of urgency for carrying out the several works.

For the proper conduct of work in the Public Works Department, the officers of the executive line, particularly the Sub-Division Officers, who were primarily responsible for scrutinizing the estimates, should be capable men and holders of University degrees. The rule that such officers should be holders of University degrees had been changed and they were being recruited from among the upper subordinates. In the opinion of the member, the change was to be deprecated, especially when there were many B. E.'s of the Madras University in Travancore without employment.

In the ministerial line also, only graduates should be appointed. The Public Works Department being a department spending large sums of money, the officers should be responsible men with a high sense of duty. Such qualities were present more in graduates than others. Graduates should therefore be encouraged. Managers and Head Clerks of all Division Offices should be graduates. Similarly, they should be freely recruited in the Chief Engineer's office also. The number of existing graduates in the department was few. A freer recruitment of graduates would tend to stop many of the existing evils in the department.

DEWAN'S REPLY: Mr. Krishna Pillai, you gave a good deal of your attention to the subject of estimates and the memo of costs and wages. The memo of costs by the way has been done away with. As regards estimates, I know a word '*adangal*' is used in Malayalam. But I do not know the precise connotation of the word '*adangal*'. But I know the English word 'estimate' and I will tell you what the word 'estimate' means. It is when a person makes a guess at probable cost. Therefore an estimate is not a final account of actual cost. It is only a forecast. Human beings being what they are, forecasts must sometimes turn out different from actualities. In the Public Works Department, I am very happy to tell you, that now-a-days estimates do not very often exceed the actual cost, which, I think, is a very satisfactory position. An estimate is not a very easy thing to prepare nor an easy thing to check. If you go and spend a couple of hours in the P. W. D. office I am sure the Chief Engineer will be quite prepared to show you all the stages

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and intricacies in the preparation of an estimate. And after you have gone into that, I am confident that you will not have occasion to complain against the estimates prepared by the Public Works Department.

You refer to the rule in regard to promotion from the upper subordinates to the Sub-Divisional Officers. I think you are labouring under a misapprehension. The Chief Engineer will explain the true position about it if you will kindly go to him.

In regard to promotion and appointment, you advocate the enforcement of a rule that every member of the clerical establishment in the Chief Engineer's office and the Public Works Department should be a B. A. The non-graduates have also to live and get on. If this proposal is carried out, I do not know what the unfortunate non-graduates are to do ; and some class of work is humble enough for the non-graduates too. So do not condemn the non-graduates.

60. Means of communication in the Chirayinkil taluk.

MR. K. P. MARTANDAN VAIDYAN (*Member, Chirayinkil taluk, Group II*) in thanking the Government for the construction of a bridge at Villikadavu, Ayirur, said that the road leading from that place to the Quilon-Paripalli road was in a bad condition and unfit for motor and other wheeled traffic. The length of the road was only three miles and it badly needed metalling.

A new road had been opened starting from the first mile of the Paripalli-Madattura road. There was also another road in the same direction but both the roads were in a bad condition. Besides, a small bridge on the old road was in disrepair. It should be restored and both the roads taken over for departmental maintenance after a local inspection by the Chief Engineer, if necessary.

The necessity for a road from Nilakkamukku to Kayikara *kadavu* and a bridge at the latter place had been urged upon the Government both through the Sri Mulam Popular Assembly and through the Legislative Council. Kayikara was a trade centre for coir, *copra*, fish, etc. The three Government ferry boats at Kayikara and adjacent landings were insufficient for the use of the inhabitants there and unable to cope with the traffic. Many people had to cross and recross the canal in pursuit of their daily avocations in life such as coir-making, fishing in the sea, etc. School-going pupils had also to use the ferry with great inconvenience. Besides, the inhabitants of the western side of the canal had to get good drinking water from the eastern side. In view of the above, a bridge should be constructed soon at Kayikara *kadavu*.

A road from the Sivagiri *mutt* at Varkalai to the English School attached to it was an absolute necessity. The school was only two furlongs away but the cart road leading from the *mutt* to the school was circuitous being about 5 miles in length. It was very inconvenient. The school was one of the chief charitable institutions started by Sri Narayana Guru. The inhabitants of the locality were willing to surrender the lands required for the road free of compensation. The construction of the road should therefore be ordered to be taken up early.

A ryots' road had been constructed in continuation of the Ayirur–Anchumurti temple road and leading to the Paravur-Chirakkara road. But portions of the road were rocky and at the instance of the P. W. Sub-Division Officer, the inhabitants had agreed to a new alignment of the road and also to give up the lands required free of compensation. The work should be started soon.

There was formerly a masonry dam across the Ayirur river near the Anchumurti temple. It was very useful to the agriculturists of the locality and served to irrigate an extent of 600 acres of wet lands. But the dam was in a state of disrepair. It had a length of only 75 feet. It should be restored and made fit for cart traffic. The people were willing to defray one-fourth of the expenditure in connection with work, their share being recovered in ten annual instalments.

DEWAN'S REPLY: The present road to the English School attached to the Sivagiri *mutt* is circuitous. I know the locality and am calling upon the Chief Engineer to prepare an estimate for a new alignment of the road. But the work can be taken up this year only if the expenditure is small.

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